



INSTITUTE FOR DEFENSE ANALYSES

**NATO: Continuing and Emerging Challenges
– Continuing and New Relevance
White Paper
Study Group on NATO's Future**

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Study Group Leader

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Contents

1. Purpose	1
2. Background.....	3
3. The Evolution of Needs and Response.....	5
4. The Growing NATO Contribution to International Security	9
5. Enabling the Expanded Role of NATO as Operations Phase Down in Afghanistan	11
A. Option 1	11
B. Option 2.....	12
C. Option 3.....	13
6. The Continuing Roles of the United States in the Alliance.....	15
7. The Continuing Nuclear Forces Role	17
8. Force Adjustments and Conveying the Right Message.....	19
9. The Continuing Role of the United States European Command.....	21
10. Special Operations Commands.....	23
11. Conclusions and Recommendations	25
Appendix A Study Participants.....	A-1

1. Purpose

The demands of dealing with the current economic challenges in Europe and the necessary focus by the United States on the growing complexity of issues and relationships in Asia could lead to a perception of declining relevance of NATO to U.S. national security. The purpose of this paper is to address the continued relevance of NATO and suggest areas for special attention to leverage the evolving nature of NATO in a changing national and international security environment. The thesis of this paper is that:

- The interests of the North American and European members of the Alliance are increasingly intersecting around the globe,
- The NATO alliance has evolved to deal with the increasing complexity of international security and economic issues,
- The 28 nations of the North Atlantic Alliance together continue to constitute a powerful force to deal with this complexity and to help shape the world order by promoting security and economic progress on regional and global scales,
- The operational commitments and experiences of the last decade have amplified the capacity, competence, and interoperability of NATO military forces. This result warrants careful attention to preserving the fruits of this investment, and
- The United States needs the influence of the 27 allied nations to help deal with global challenges of mutual concern. Positive resolution and/or management of these concerns will be of increasing mutual benefit to the trans-Atlantic community.

2. Background

The NATO Alliance is a tangible demonstration of America's commitment to European security and of a determination by Europeans to reject the past policies and internal divisions that produced two catastrophic world wars. During the passage of events since the end of World War II, trans-Atlantic security cooperation, manifested by NATO, has evolved on the basis of broad principles of cooperation resting on a foundation of common enduring values and trust in democratic principles. The driving force has been and continues to be ensuring that nations in the trans-Atlantic Community benefit from these enduring values. The benefits to the members of the alliance are real and tangible. The Cold War came to a close with a peaceful resolution. The nations of Eastern Europe have regained their sovereignty and are now full participants in NATO and the European community.

The European members of NATO emerged from the chaos of war to become an economic and political powerhouse with an enduring peace approaching seven decades. The United States direct investment in Europe is greater than in any other region of the world. The same is true of European direct investment in the United States. Together North American and European NATO members' economies account for more than half of the world economy and more than a third of world trade. The trans-Atlantic relationship also defines the shape of the global economy. Either the EU or the U.S. is the largest trade and investment partner for most other countries. These developments would have at best, been sporadic, at worst impossible, absent the stable security environment underwritten by NATO.

Throughout its history the Alliance has sustained the political will and military capabilities to support and defend the common interests of its members. During the Cold War, Alliance members collectively came to a broader perspective on their own security interests, looking well beyond their respective borders. They often proved willing to compromise preferred national positions to support the needed Alliance consensus. They worked together to ensure transparency in national defense and force planning. They developed common planning, training and operational doctrine, standardized procedures, and communications systems resulting in a high degree of interoperability. By multi-member procurement of a NATO owned and operated fleet of Airborne Warning and Control aircraft they set a precedent for common procurement of key military capabilities. Consequently, as the Cold War came to a close, NATO had a strong foundation on which to build in the face of the challenges of the post-Cold War era. The Alliance has since continued to define new standards of political and military cooperation while

broadening Alliance influence to include events far beyond its traditional geographical boundaries.

3. The Evolution of Needs and Response

Experience gained during the Cold War underpins the Alliance's transition and adaptation to a defense and security environment of a far different nature. While Article 5 remains an enduring NATO commitment, today's global challenges characterized by political turbulence, terrorism, piracy, frozen conflicts, the potential for cyber-warfare, and ever increasing competition for scarce resources can profoundly affect Alliance security. These, along with ongoing economic challenges in NATO nations, place a high premium on continuing U.S. – European security cooperation. At the same time, while the trans-Atlantic relationship has long been a key element in the National Security Strategy of the United States, this strategy is likely to come under increasing scrutiny in the future. Current economic conditions will remain, at best, austere for the foreseeable future further complicating this picture and putting great stress on the trans-Atlantic Community as the top priorities in the NATO nations focus on dealing with their own economic and related domestic issues. In addition, Allied publics and military forces are impacted and challenged by nearly two decades of war in The Balkans, Iraq, and Afghanistan. As Alliance members deal with these issues, the case for NATO and the nurturing of a strong trans-Atlantic security relationship could slip into the background. Consequently, public support and awareness of the issues and the stakes remain high priority needs.

NATO through its history has been the key guarantor of European security and stability. This role alone does not ensure NATO's future. But, the twin anchors of healthy trans-Atlantic relations; enduring shared values and stable political systems; provide a strong foundation on which to build the needed continuing role for the Alliance under conditions far different than those at its inception. In the immediate post-Cold War era, conflict in the Balkans strengthened NATO's *raison d'être* at a time when the relevance and capability of the organization were in question. Extensive involvement of NATO in the Balkans included military intervention which helped to stop the bloodshed and violence among ethnic groups, and to create frameworks for peace and re-integration. NATO learned important lessons from these conflicts, including that early intervention in a conflict can prevent a wider one. These experiences shaped the Alliance's thinking on involvement in other conflicts, most recently in Libya. Through NATO sponsored organizations such as the Partnership for Peace (PfP), new states such as Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo have received military and state capacity-building training. Alliance experiences in the Balkans marked significant changes in NATO's role and its relevance in a rapidly changing security environment.

The Alliance is now in the midst of a further paradigm shift relative to its Cold War History and its post-Cold War transformation. How well this shift is managed by the Alliance will significantly impact the future health of the trans-Atlantic relationship. Ultimately, NATO's utility is determined by what it can do, not what it has done, i.e.; what it provides that cannot otherwise be provided.

Now well into the twenty first century, the nature of NATO operations and commitments and the relationship with the United States has evolved significantly from the largely bi-polar world of the Cold War. In that era, the objective of NATO nations was a defense capability sufficient to deter the Warsaw Pact from aggression and to prevail against it if deterrence failed. The remainder of global security issues, including those relevant to European NATO members were treated as the responsibility of the United States, other U.S. led alliances, and bi-lateral relationships.

While the commitment to defend NATO territory (Article 5 of the Treaty) continues, the evolution since the end of the Cold War has broadened NATO's role from a narrow defense to a broader security organization dealing with a wider range of longer-term and emerging threats to stability and economic progress. The expanded focus is on intersecting interests aimed toward promoting a world order compatible with the values and interests of Alliance member states. A major catalyst for change was the broad strategic recognition that, with the end of the Cold War, the international security environment became more complex, diverse, and globally interconnected.

There are at least four key milestones on the path from the Cold War concept of NATO to the present day.

- First was recognition that armed conflicts in Europe outside the North Atlantic Treaty Area warranted a NATO military response. Key NATO nations concluded that the ongoing conflicts in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Kosovo precipitated by the breakup of Yugoslavia had long-term negative implications for NATO nations and for their security. Alliance political consensus was achieved as the result of member nations recognizing that the benefit to European security exceeded the risk of involvement and warranted an extended commitment.
- A second milestone was the larger NATO commitment to more extensive out-of-area operations. Breaking new ground, the Alliance agreed to take over the training of Iraqi security forces even as other individual members of the Alliance were fully engaged in coalition military operations along with the U.S., and in Afghanistan, which ultimately led to the establishment of the International Security Assistance Force and a full NATO role.
- A third milestone was NATO political support for deposing long-standing dictatorships in North Africa.

- A fourth was Operation Unified Protector in Libya led by NATO allies.

This evolutionary path indicates a growing understanding of NATO members on both sides of the Atlantic of the need for the European members to play a greater role in global security issues.

4. The Growing NATO Contribution to International Security

A starting point for the NATO contribution is the historic record of peace and stability in Europe. The large number of military cemeteries in Europe is a lasting testimonial to the terrible costs of conflict in Europe during the first half of the 20th Century. While there is a complex set of factors supporting the marked departure from a history of military conflict in Europe, the existence of NATO has clearly been a major contributor. The positive political, economic and security benefits of a stable peaceful Europe have been global. There was also a complex set of contributors to the end of the Cold War. Still, the benefits of membership in NATO that contrasted sharply with the experience of membership in the Warsaw Pact were undoubtedly a major contributor. These two facts point to an enduring two-way flow of security benefits between the North American allies and their European NATO partners. Those benefits have expanded from U.S. and NATO allies mutual interests in North America and Europe to mutual interests of nations in Europe, the Middle East and Africa that are not NATO members. With the right focus, those benefits can further extend to intersecting mutual interests on a global scale.

With the end of the bi-polar world and the expansion of NATO membership, the Alliance has become a powerful force to influence and shape the world order. There is increasing awareness in both Europe and North America of the inextricable connectivity of the global economy and the global impact of instabilities and conflicts. The U.S., for its part, has a long-standing role in promoting security and economic progress in the Western Hemisphere, Europe, the Middle East, North Africa, and Asia. With economic globalization, the other members of NATO have increasing connections and influence across the globe and the potential to play an increasing role in global security.

Through the Alliance there is an additional set of connections that have contributed to international security and which have further potential for increasingly significant participation. These connections consist of NATO partnerships with nations as diverse as Australia, Indonesia, Japan, South Korea, and others, each of whom recognizes the importance and enhanced effects of forging cooperative partnerships with like-minded nations in regions where mutual interests converge. NATO is also reaching out to international organizations, such as the European Union and the United Nations to ensure and perpetuate the benefits of global peace and security. This outreach has already paid dividends and needs to continue and expand.

The range of participants in the ISAF in Afghanistan is a clear indication of the influence of the 28 member alliance. The ISAF force included some 40,000 participants from allies. The commitment of the 28 members of NATO was instrumental in attracting the commitment of 21 other nations who perceived intersecting interests in dealing with the threat from conditions and issues in Afghanistan. Hence, there is now a coalition of some 49 nations that has demonstrated in a compelling fashion important shared values and goals.

A central reality of today's world is that asymmetric threat strategy has become a major challenge to NATO nations as terrorist groups exploit poorly controlled territories to establish safe havens and create transnational networks. As a result, The United States' and Europe can expect to continue to face threats which are increasingly more diverse, less visible, and less predictable. In addition, the danger of non-state actors acquiring weapons of mass destruction creates a more unpredictable and more complex security environment. States under economic stress along with failed or failing states provide havens and breeding grounds where transnational terror groups can flourish. Networks in Africa such as Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb, and Al-Shabaab are of specific concern. The potential for instability in some former Soviet Republics is also of concern as ethnic and territorial grievances remain unresolved. The challenges of both symmetric and asymmetric threats to global security call for strengthened long-term multilateral efforts. These challenges provide yet another intersection of interests between NATO and other potential partners around the globe.

NATO's post-9/11 military counterterrorism strategy has not yet been integrated with a comprehensive civilian policy. The need is a policy encompassing the full range of capabilities necessary to deter and defend against terrorism within the context of the essential core tasks of the Alliance—collective defense, crisis management, and cooperative security. Such broad reaching policy integration would complement defense and deterrence and would substantially reinforce the effectiveness of NATO's counterterrorism measures, as redefined at the Lisbon Summit of 2010 in "NATO's new Strategic Concept." The key is to focus on prevention while building a pragmatic and international system of information sharing. Within this context NATO can play a leading role in providing systematic assistance in counterterrorism training, ensuring programmatic coherence, and bridging gaps within NATO's core elements. Moreover, international security would benefit from enhanced cooperation among local actors, state institutions, and NATO Centers of Excellence. Another important objective should be to create a more effective strategic partnership at the international organizations level (for example: NATO-EU, NATO-UN, and NATO-OSCE).

In recent years there has been a rising threat from Somali piracy. NATO has provided a response to this threat through its Operation Ocean Shield and has been working to forge a coordinated counter-piracy strategy between nations and regions internationally. The varied roles of nations and international organizations involved in cooperation on military and strategic responses to piracy need to be harmonized. Here again, is another aspect of NATO reaching beyond its geographic boundaries in response to a global threat to NATO nations' interests.

5. Enabling the Expanded Role of NATO as Operations Phase Down in Afghanistan

The increasing importance of the European members of NATO relevant to interests that intersect with U.S. national interests is a fact of life. Still, realizing the greater potential is not assured. NATO faces significant challenges as the international security environment continues to evolve. These are coupled with economic challenges currently besetting North America and much of Europe. At the same time, NATO allies and key partners have developed and demonstrated high quality military capabilities in participating in operations in Afghanistan. With the end or marked drawdown of those operations in 2014, there will be the issue of the future of those capabilities. And, given ongoing economic challenges, there is likely to be a strong demand for a new peace dividend. This leads to multiple possibilities and paths to a post-Afghanistan defense posture. At least three possibilities are worthy of mention.

- Limiting the scope of future NATO interests and commitments to Article 5 demands,
- Retaining the current operational focus within the regions of current operations while maintaining the capacity to respond quickly with a significant capability, and
- The second option (above) for NATO military capabilities and a greater global political engagement.

A. Option 1

The first option is to return to a near exclusive focus on Article 5. This could be a logical choice if there was assurance that, in the future, NATO's fundamental interests will not be threatened by events outside NATO territory or if the United States were willing and able to return to the Cold War assumption that the U.S., alone or with a pick-up team of partner nations, will deal with issues arising beyond NATO territory. Neither is plausible. It is unlikely that the end of NATO operations in Afghanistan will produce stability in the region and certainly will not provide assurance that there will not be unforeseen challenges in this or other regions. It is difficult to find logic in an assumption of lasting stability favorable to NATO interests given recent history. None of the contingencies warranting a NATO military response over the past decade were predictable or expected. Hence, it is prudent to expect that there will be a continuing need for the allied military capabilities developed or enhanced for operations in recent engagements.

B. Option 2

The fruits of The Alliance's recent operational experience - a by-product of the large investments by NATO and its partners who together carried out these missions - will almost certainly be of great value in meeting future challenges to trans-Atlantic security interests. Over the past decade, NATO allies contributed troops to Operation Enduring Freedom (Afghanistan), Operation Unified Protection (Libya), Operation Ocean Shield (anti-piracy), Operation Active Endeavor (counter-terrorism), Kosovo, and the Balkans. Allies also contributed to security training in Iraq and responded to a number of civil, non-combat crises. Allowing this hard earned competency and interoperability to atrophy would be a serious waste of investment. This will be a non-issue if, as over the past decade, new challenges demanding a NATO military response appear on the horizon.

If they do not, the logical approach is the same approach used with U.S. forces. When contingencies end, there is both the need and the opportunity to focus on lessons learned, to reset, to restructure the force if needed, and to prepare for the next set of challenges. In short, the forces move from a contingency execution footing to a readiness posture. Fortunately, there is an existing NATO structure for sustaining those capabilities in a readiness posture. A revitalized NATO Response Force (NRF) could provide the structure to sustain and adjust the capabilities. The U.S. has committed a Brigade Combat Team (BCT) to the NRF and plans to deploy at least a battalion of the Brigade to Europe each year. This can be a core U.S. contribution to revitalizing the NRF. The opportunity to train alongside and to develop capabilities compatible with U.S. forces, through realistic training to meet the standards specified by Allied Command Transformation, can serve as a powerful incentive for allies to contribute to the NRF. The potential result can be a well-trained, capable, interoperable NRF ready to respond to security challenges. Current training areas and facilities for ground and air forces in Europe and for air forces in the U.S. are available for realistic training and exercises.

However, the NRF cannot be adapted to meet the demands of real time operational training without resource support. As it now stands the NRF is supported, with some exceptions, on the basis of a NATO "costs lie where they fall" policy. Essentially this means each nation pays its own way when its forces are in the NRF rotation. The problem with this arrangement is that some nations can afford it, others cannot. In addition, there is a sense of unfair burden sharing by those nations whose forces are in the NRF during periods of higher activity. A possible resolution is to establish funding lines within the Allied Command Operations and Allied Command Transformation military budgets that could be filled as NATO ISAF draws down. NATO Military Commanders would then have stability in resources sufficient to ensure a regular set of useful training and exercise rotations for NRF assigned forces. Unless something along these lines is put into place the NRF will likely remain as a "reserve" force to which nations assign forces with no expectation of actual employment. Should this be the case, the anticipated benefits to the United States and to the Alliance of the U.S. deployed BCT contribution to maintaining Alliance operational experience, interoperability and other capability enhancements

will fail to materialize. Bringing the NRF up to full operational standards of readiness and training should be a major priority for both the U.S. and its NATO allies. Such an NRF could form the core of a credible article 5 base force along with an effective means of precluding atrophy of experience gained in real world combat operations.

Allied Command Transformation (ACT) plays the major role in developing and coordinating Alliance training, education and exercise programs. For its part and within the parameters of its leadership role the U.S. should ensure full support for these programs. This means sending U.S. forces to participate in Alliance military training and education, Alliance exercises, and Centers of Excellence (which are nationally managed and funded on a tuition basis with oversight and coordination by ACT). In addition, the U.S. should review its own International Military Education and Training (IMET) programs. While details of the current status of these programs is beyond the scope of this paper, past experience has been that IMET offers to the U.S. a level of continuity and access between U.S. and Allied nations military of increasing value over time as alumni progress to levels of top leadership.

There are also existing initiatives aiming toward enhancing Alliance military effectiveness in the face of what is accepted as the inevitability of reduced defense spending on both sides of the Atlantic. These are the Smart Defense Initiative and the Connected Forces Initiative. However, the Smart Defense Initiative at present is best characterized as a collection of programs that members are willing to undertake with only limited connection to strategic context. The focus is on the “what and how” and the initiative, if taken seriously, can produce useful capabilities. Beyond this is the need to better exploit the potential for more effective use of defense resources by addressing the “why.” That is, identifying and agreeing on the strategic challenges the alliance is likely to face; the capability gaps in meeting these challenges; the priorities for addressing those gaps, and; a multi-national approach to progress in filling them. All of this has to be tempered by affordability and the willingness of alliance members to commit to a multi-national, prioritized approach. As, in the past, this will require significant leadership effort by the United States even as the U.S. role becomes less dominant than in the past. With the right set of motivations and level of attention, this rebalance of roles can be a positive development.

C. Option 3

The third option is intended to add the potential influence of the 28 nation’s political, economic, cultural, and military power to shape events where NATO military participation would not be expected. Even where military participation is not expected, their combined military and political power is a significant part of the overall persuasive influence our allies can wield on the world stage. It is noteworthy that minus the U.S. the other 27 of these nations together provide the world’s second largest defense budget. While pressure to meet the agreed goal of 2% of GNP for defense remains reasonable, and pressures to live up to the agreement

remain appropriate, this particular challenge should not be allowed to obscure the significant military power that still resides within NATO other than the U.S.

Europeans and Americans have intersecting strategic interests across the globe and coinciding equities in sustained stability and prosperity. China is Europe's second largest trading partner. More than twenty-five percent of Europe's global trade is from the Asia-Pacific region. Consequently, the potential impact of such issues as freedom of navigation in the South China Sea, the security of the Straits of Malacca, and the threats to Japan and South Korea from North Korea are not just regional issues--they are global issues and as important to our European NATO allies as they are to our allies in Asia. China's interest in European-NATO as exemplified by numerous NATO-China meetings and exchanges over the last decade are a testament to the potential for NATO to exert political and diplomatic influence and pressures on issues of world-wide interest, which combined with the economic clout of the EU, can be powerfully persuasive. That influence is further multiplied by relations between NATO, the EU and other partners and by a matrix of bilateral relationships between NATO nations and Asian nations, to include China, on issues of mutual concern or interest.

6. The Continuing Roles of the United States in the Alliance

While NATO has been a powerful force for peace and stability in Europe, to the benefit of the world, the Alliance has not resolved all the important nation-to-nation issues on the continent. The United States has played a number of important roles and will need to continue to do so. These include:

- Exercising strong political leadership,
- Facilitating harmony where there are nation to nation issues,
- Providing key military capabilities stationed in the theater and from global U.S. resources to include high-end space-based and air-breathing ISR assets,
- Promoting multi-national force enhancement,
- Providing leadership and/or strong support in contingency operations,
- Promoting interoperability,
- Making a major contribution to joint and combined training opportunities, and
- Providing the nuclear umbrella for most of the members of the alliance.

During the Cold War, there was a dominant member of each of two opposing alliances. But, since the end of the Cold War with the demise of the Soviet Union and the re-unification of Germany, a new paradigm has been emerging. In this new paradigm, the U.S. will need to continue the roles indicated above, but there has been and will continue to be a shift in the balance between the influence of the United States and the other members of the Alliance. That balance has been moving and will continue to move towards more effective and more equal partnerships. The experience in the Middle East has demonstrated that acting unilaterally is neither politically nor militarily viable. Hence, there has been and will continue to be emphasis on building multi-national partnerships among those with the capability and willingness to participate in the various partnership opportunities and needs. The scope and range of partnerships has expanded as the scope and range of challenges has increased. In addition, as was demonstrated by Operation Unified Protector in Libya, the United States will not always be the lead player but rather can play an effective supporting role in some NATO European led coalition operations.

But Libyan operations also highlighted significant shortfalls in some NATO European capabilities. Gaps in capability, ranging from smart bombs and other weapons to command and control assets, high-end intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance systems (ISR), and air to air refueling capabilities, were filled by the U.S. This underscored what some view as an unhealthy dependence on U.S. capabilities, raising concerns that if the U.S. is engaged in other parts of the globe these assets would not be available for contingencies which may surface in or near the European region. At the same time, in the face of austere economic conditions and pressure on defense budgets, rather than NATO allies trying to procure systems such as high-end ISR capabilities, a better option could be to first fill the gaps in their weapons inventories. While entailing some risk, this approach would contribute significantly to creating a more capable and sustainable European force. At the same time, European members should continue to work to close identified capabilities gaps.

In addressing high-end shortfalls, (air-to-air refueling, strategic lift, enhanced command and control) multinational cooperation appears to be a viable way forward. In this regard a combination of European Union efforts and the Alliance's Smart Defense Initiative, which is directed toward alignment of NATO's capability priorities with those of its member nations, should serve to identify multinational cooperation opportunities across a spectrum of capability shortfalls.

A key need, with decreasing defense budgets and resulting U.S. force structure and force alignment changes, will be sustaining confidence in the U.S. commitment to Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty. This issue is currently a source of contention - most notably between Poland and Western European members. The need for reassurance of the U.S. commitment to Article 5 is exacerbated by the need for the United States to promote better relationships with Russia while sustaining a clear commitment to the North Atlantic Treaty. The clearest and most valued signal of commitment is U.S. presence. Still, there has never been an expectation that theater based U.S. forces would meet the needed U.S. commitment. Instead U.S. forces are globally sourced to add to the defense of Europe as needed.

There is also a need to carefully manage the message regarding the complexity of the relationship with Russia. The concerns of Central and Eastern European members are exacerbated by the continuing threats from the Russian leadership about the European missile defense system, the economic threat posed by Russian control of natural gas and oil resources, and their historic experience with aggression from their east. These factors contribute to pressures to move back towards a primarily Article 5 mindset. Indeed, an attack on the Treaty Area remains the most stressing challenge to NATO and the cardinal reason for the Alliance. But, for now it is not among the most likely challenges and a return to a purely defensive alliance would not be in the interests of either the North American or European members.

7. The Continuing Nuclear Forces Role

NATO allies have recognized that in this complex and uncertain security environment the Alliance needs the full range of capabilities, including nuclear, to deter and defend against any threat to the security of its populations and territories. While NATO's nuclear forces have a reduced role in addressing the more complex 21st Century security challenges, these forces will continue to play an essential role in dealing with the reality of nuclear weapons capabilities that can threaten the interests of the Alliance. As was agreed in the 2010 Strategic Concept, as long as nuclear weapons exist, NATO will remain a nuclear Alliance.

Consequently, an inherent element of Alliance strategy in implementing the Article 5 guarantee is the extension of the "nuclear security umbrella" provided by these weapons. NATO's nuclear forces are important political tools to help ensure that a potential adversary's mindset is that the costs of aggression far exceed the potential benefit.

The role of NATO's nuclear forces will continue to evolve as security circumstances change. As confirmed by the Strategic Concept and, most recently, the Deterrence and Defense Posture Review (DDPR), a key element of that policy is maintaining Alliance nuclear burden and risk sharing, which includes the peacetime basing of U.S. nuclear weapons on the territory of NATO members. Continued participation by European allies in NATO nuclear planning, training, command, control and consultation arrangements, and, if necessary, operational missions using dual-capable aircraft (DCA) is essential to demonstrate Alliance solidarity to friends and potential adversaries.

NATO nuclear burden sharing, including the presence of U.S. nuclear weapons in Europe, is perceived by many allies as the most tangible representation of the nuclear element of NATO's collective security guarantee. In 2008 the Secretary of Defense Task Force on U.S. Department of Defense Nuclear Weapons Management (The Schlesinger Panel) studied NATO's nuclear posture and concluded that the nuclear deterrence posture remains credible and effective noting that "DCA fighters and nuclear weapons are visible, capable, recallable, reusable, and flexible and are a military statement of NATO and U.S. political will." In addition to providing assurance of U.S. commitment and serving as a non-proliferation tool since allies won't need to develop and field their own nuclear weapons, the Schlesinger Panel also noted that the DCA "contribute directly to the nuclear deterrent mission and increase the deterrent value of the weapons. They convey the will of multiple allied countries, creating real uncertainty for any country that might contemplate seeking political or military advantage through the threat or use of WMD..."

However, the Schlesinger Panel went on to note a number of deficiencies in the nuclear posture and made a number of recommendations to address them. The Schlesinger recommendations as they relate to NATO should be implemented to include maintaining and upgrading the dual capable aircraft as both a symbol of U.S. commitment and, as stated in the DDPR “ensuring the broadest possible” opportunity for NATO allies to actively participate in the nuclear deterrence mission. Additionally, in recognizing the need for clear understanding of deterrence theory and operational nuclear doctrine, it would be useful and appropriate for NATO, through ACT and supported by DOD, to establish a Deterrence Center of Excellence. This center would develop a curriculum to educate officers and government officials in deterrence theory and operational nuclear doctrine, and raise awareness and visibility of NATO’s deterrent posture which would, in so doing, increase its credibility and effectiveness.

As part of the process of continually reviewing NATO’s nuclear deterrence posture and following consultations within the Alliance, further steps in changing the configuration of NATO’s nuclear deterrence posture based on changes in the security environment, should (1) take into account the disparity between NATO and Russian stockpiles of shorter-range nuclear weapons; (2) be considered in the context of U.S.-Russian arms control negotiations; and (3) weigh the countervailing political effects within the Alliance and in the minds of potential adversaries.

In sum, as stated in the Strategic Concept, “deterrence, based on an appropriate mix of nuclear and conventional capabilities, remains a core element of our overall strategy.”

8. Force Adjustments and Conveying the Right Message

The inevitable concern over the reduction of U.S. forces in Europe can be exacerbated by the tone and content of the message. In the current electronically connected world strategic messages are global regardless of the intended target. Hence a strategic message that has the intended positive effect in Asia can have a negative effect in Europe. For example, the so-called pivot to Asia or rebalancing message that reassures Asian allies has not been reassuring to our European allies. It can be interpreted as intending to convey that we are shifting our interest in NATO to Asia in a zero-sum situation.

There could be a more positive and more effective message. That message is that the increased attention to interests in Asia is not a reduction in U.S. intersection with the interests of our NATO allies. Freedom of navigation in the South China Sea and the security of the Straits of Malacca are as important to Canada and Europe as they are to the U.S. and our Asian allies. Hence, increased emphasis on security in Asia is not in opposition to NATO security concerns. Further, given the need to increase attention to these issues of importance to all members of NATO, the success of NATO in dealing with regional security challenges makes greater attention to matters in Asia both possible and imperative. While, the challenges at home may lead some allies to reluctance to look beyond the immediate local political challenges, the most pressing challenges at the moment are economic in character and economics is global. What should be good news to NATO allies is that the U.S. NATO partner has a largely unique capability to address issues on the other side of the globe that are important to the economic interests of our NATO partners.

Again, the emphasis should be on the need for regional and global partnerships to address intersecting interests of the NATO membership that are compatible with, not in competition with, intersecting interests with our Asian friends and allies.

9. The Continuing Role of the United States European Command

The U.S European Command plays a key role in advancing U.S NATO interests through its training, readiness, and multi-national exercise programs in addition to improving interoperability and the maintenance and building of needed capabilities. Another key role of EUCOM is to ensure the U.S. maintains strategic access across Europe to support global operations.

EUCOM Offices of Defense Cooperation located in or near every allied country in Europe, its well trained and ready force structure, and its strategic overview are well suited to help ensure close coordination between NATO force planning and goals, available allied forces, and U.S. forces in Europe. This relatively recent focus serves to underscore the high level of U.S. interest in ensuring that while there may be fewer U.S. forces on the ground in Europe the need to ensure allied force interoperability, standards of readiness, and availability remains a top priority. In addition, this effort helps nations to get the most out of limited defense resources.

10. Special Operations Commands

U.S. leadership of the NATO Special Operation Headquarters is complementary to other U.S. bilateral and multilateral efforts to build NATO allied and Partner Special Operations Forces (SOF) capability. This framework provides a foundation for these forces to work more effectively and coherently with the U.S. and with each other. The result has been a generational leap forward in capabilities and capacity and an economy of force effort that leverages the unique venue of NATO to effectively and efficiently enhance the capability, capacity, and interoperability of Allied and Partner SOF from a centralized hub of influence within the Alliance. SOF provides still another example of trans-Atlantic cooperation underpinning a key U.S. interest.

11. Conclusions and Recommendations

There is a set of distinct U.S. interests which could not be fulfilled short of U.S. involvement in the Alliance and from which both the U.S. and its Allies greatly benefit. These are summarized as follows:

- A Europe that remains at peace within itself and in partnership with its trans-Atlantic neighbors,
- The positive political, economic, and security benefits of a stable peaceful Europe with global reach in conjunction with continuing healthy trade and economic relations across the Atlantic,
- A political forum, backed with credible military capability, for dealing with regional and extra-regional security issues,
- The ability to find options to avoid unilateral actions - which experience in the Middle East has demonstrated are neither politically nor militarily viable - through multi-national partnerships among nations with the capability and willingness to participate in responding to various crises or contingencies involving either military or civil operations or some combination thereof,
- Sustained access to strategic bases and logistics support in Europe, and
- Maintenance of a credible nuclear deterrent under conditions of shared responsibility.

Underpinning these interests are the following specific needs:

- Article 5 remains at the core of trans-Atlantic security: It remains crucial for European NATO Allies, especially Central and Eastern European Allies, to be certain of the United States unwavering commitment to European Security. The United States has made clear its continuing commitment to this obligation. It is also important for the United States to ensure that NATO Allies do not assess the U.S. commitment in terms of the size of U.S. forces stationed in Europe. Rather the U.S. commitment can be supported from its world-wide resources.
- With the United States' continuing global security responsibilities, which benefits the full Alliance, NATO allies should define and actively support a more equal partnership with regard to regional concerns:

- The effective use of the combined power of North American and European global economic and political influence and an expanded set of NATO global partnerships can be a powerful and positive influence to shape policies and outcomes.
- While the U.S. remains true to its Alliance commitments both in terms of response to Article 5 contingencies and agreed NATO or coalition operations, NATO allies need to be willing to take greater responsibility for dealing with regional and peripheral contingencies.
- NATO allies in the face of severe economic conditions should take as a top priority the need to ensure their inventories of basic weapon and similar shortfalls are replenished. In the event of a contingency operation NATO allies would in turn look to the U.S. for some high-end capabilities.
- The United States and the NATO Allies will benefit from working together to ensure that force readiness, training and education across the Alliance are sustained and that the operational experience among the forces gained over the course of the recent past is not lost.
- The United States and the NATO Allies need to support and nourish the foundation of trust and understanding built across decades of political and operational experience and multinational cooperation to ensure the continuing evolution of a healthy and productive trans-Atlantic relationship.
- So long as nuclear weapons exist, NATO will need to remain a nuclear Alliance with a credible and effective deterrent force.

In addition, the U.S. and the Alliance should:

- Ensure Adequate Funding Support for the NRF: Establish funding lines within the Allied Command Operations and Allied Command Transformation military budgets that could be filled as NATO ISAF draws down to ensure NATO Military Commanders the needed stability to support regular training and exercise rotations for NRF assigned forces.
- Exploit U.S. plans to dispose of excess defense equipment: Develop a program designed to enhance overall Alliance military capabilities through upgrades to more modern military equipment through transfers of excess U.S. defense equipment. This could help NATO member nations sustain capabilities in the face of severe economic restrictions.
- Take as a first priority the need for NATO Allies to fill the gaps in their weapons inventories in lieu of pursuing higher end ISR capabilities. In turn, the U.S. should ensure the availability of its own high-end capabilities in support of agreed NATO European or coalition contingency operations. This does not mean European members should ignore their need to close the capabilities gap. Rather, it is a matter of priorities and economies of scale driven by budget restrictions.

- Seek solutions to high-end shortfalls, (air-to-air refueling, strategic lift, command and control) through enhanced multinational cooperation building on complementary European Union efforts and the Alliance's Smart Defense Initiative to identify multinational cooperation opportunities across a spectrum of capability shortfalls.

Secretary of State Dean Acheson in a speech proposing the North Atlantic Treaty on March 18, 1949 observed, "It is important to keep in mind that the really successful national and international institutions are those that recognize and express underlying realities." We believe that in today's world NATO continues on this path and will do so as long as the leadership and the political will of its membership remains strong in the face of the many security challenges before it. The security of the United States and its interests are well served by its membership in NATO.

Appendix A

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